

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Markup of *H.R. 5636: National Institute of Standards and Technology Campus Security Act*
July 7, 2016

Thank you Chairman Smith.

As we all know, in the past year there have been two somewhat high profile security incidents on NIST campuses. First, in July 2015, a NIST police officer caused a small explosion while he was attempting to make methamphetamine. That officer immediately resigned, was tried and convicted of a felony, and sent to prison.

This year, a man with apparent mental health issues was found trespassing in a NIST facility in Colorado. That man was found in a supposedly secure area. Again, that person was arrested by police and cited.

These incidents raised legitimate concerns and prompted the NIST Director to take several actions to address these concerns, including convening an ad hoc panel of security experts and beginning steps to better secure the Boulder campus.

The incidents have also prompted the Majority to investigate NIST.

Those investigations haven't yielded much useful information, nor any evidence of systemic waste, fraud, or abuse at NIST. Perhaps as a result of that, this past April, Chairman Smith and Chairman Thune of the Senate Commerce Committee jointly requested a GAO study on NIST police and security issues.

That is why it is so odd to see a very similar study requirement in this bill. Given that GAO will surely prioritize the joint Chairs' request, I don't really see the point in requiring this study through legislation.

Moreover, the GAO study may be premature.

The advice that the outside security experts provided to NIST has been digested and the agency is currently implementing changes to address their findings. It might be more useful to review NIST security practices a year from now, rather than in the midst of significant changes.

I also have some minor concerns about the rest of the bill. Part of the bill simply legislates something that NIST and the Department of Commerce are already doing. But the bill also micromanages staffing at the agency in a way that could be counterproductive to the purpose of the bill.

With that, I yield back.